Nonverbal Predicate Clefts and ye–resumption in Haitian Creole

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## 1. SUMMARY AND CLAIMS

- *ye*-**resumption**: the pronunciation of the word *ye* in the base position of a left–dislocated DP or PP – or, a **nonverbal predicate** (DeGraff 1992).

- I frame my analysis of **ye-resumption** against the theoretical background of **derivation by phase** and **the stranding problem**, arguing that HC can only front nonphasal XPs if a resumptive strategy is available to repair an empty phase.

3. BACKGROUND

- Formal approaches to the syntax of *ye-resumption* normally involve puzzling out whether or not *ye* is an overt verbal form (Kihm 2018), an aspectual/predicate head (Déprez 2003) and/or a resumptive pro-form for the moved non-verbal predicate (DeGraff 1992).

- *ye-resumption* still to be situated against recent theoretical advancements in **PredP-fronting**, **multiple-copy spell-out** and **economy of derivation** in generative grammar (Landau 2006, Kratzer and Selkirk 2007, Kandybowicz 2015, Van Urk 2022).

- *ye-resumption* is associated with moved phrasal material. However, generally in HC the fronting of phrasal consitutents (e.g., object fronting, subject raising) leaves behind **a silent copy** (e.g., *se [DP bal la]i Mari frape ti* "it's the ball that Mary kicked"; cf. **7b**).

- *Proposal.* *ye-resumption* is an instance of a **postsyntactic rule of lexical insertion** where *ye* surfaces to satisy **economy constraints on PF derivation**, capturing the intuition that *ye-resumption* is "more economical" (DeGraff 1992) than doubling in an articulated framework of **Spell-Out by phase** and an **OT model** of syntactic-prosodic alignment.

Derivation by Phase (Chomskly 2001, Kratzer and Selkirk 2007)

Figure. **Prosodic Spell-Out by phase** of *Maria Studied Laws* (Kratzer and Selkirk 2007: 104)
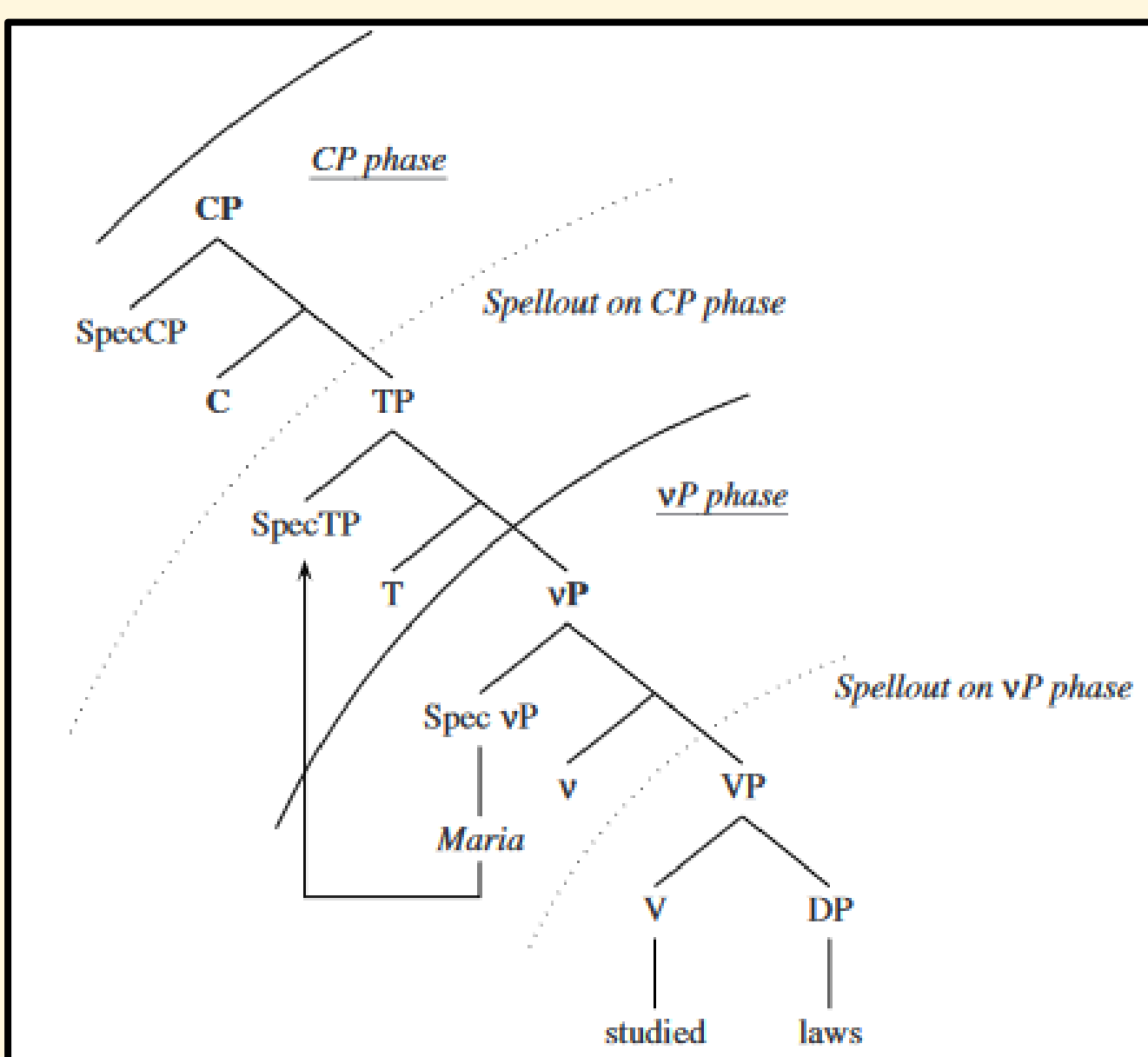
- Syntax communicates with PF at certain intervals over the course of a derivation, namely, at the point where certain (phase) heads are merged.

- At Spell-out words in the domain of a phase receive their phonological form.

- Whether or not a phase head itself is contained in its respective domain varies across proposals.

- CP and *v*P are commonly accepted phases, and whether there are other phases varies across proposals.

2. DATA
2.1 Basic Distribution of *ye* and Copula Constructions

- **Haitian Creole (HC)** blocks **nonverbal predicate** positions from being empty after movement, preferring instead the late insertion of *ye* as a repair strategy

  1. (a) Malis se/*ye yon doktè
         Malis SE a doctor
         "Malis is a doctor"
     (b) (se) yon doktè Malis *(ye)
         SE a doctor Malis YE
         "Malis is a doctor"

- *Ye* is not strictly utterance final and can occur in more complex embedded syntactic structures

  2. (a) (se) [DP [CP moun nan (ke) li ye] a] (ke) li ye
         SE person the COMP 3.SG YE the COMP 3.SG YE
         "(S)he/it is what (s)he is"

     (b) [DP [CP Tout kote paspò mwen ye]] [TP bous mwen ye]
            all where passport 1.SG YE wallet 1.SG YE
         "Wherever my passport is, my wallet is"

- Long-distance dependency effects; e.g., extraction out of an **adjunct island**

  3. (a) Kisa Malis *(ye) (b) *[CP Kisai, [TP Kristofè kontan [CP paske
         What Malis YE What Christopher happy because
         "What is Malis" [TP Bouki sonje [CP ti, Malis ye]]]]]
                         Bouki remember Malis YE
                         "What is Christopher happy because Bouki remembers what Malis is?"

- *se*/*ye* **complementarity** and PP predicates

  4. (a) Malis (*se) anba tab la (b) (se) anba tab la Malis *(ye)
         Malis SE under table the SE under table the Malis YE
         "Malis is under the table" "Malis is under the table"

- The string *se ye* is **banned** in HC and the two words are in **complementary distribution**. Still, *ye* has a broader distribution than *se*

2.2 Is *ye* nonverbal predicate resumption?

- Two competing analyses of **ye** in generative grammar and for both, **ye** co-occurs with a displaced predicate

- **1. Copula Analysis.** *ye* is the strong form of a verbal copula that heads a PredP projection and surfaces in sentence final position **when Pred is not able to double** (as it may with adjectives in **5b**). *se* is its corresponding weak/elsewhere form and wherever *ye* is not needed, it is simply not allowed (Déprez and Vinet 1997, Déprez 2003).

  5. (a) Malis (*se) bèl (b) bèl Malis (*se) bèl (*ye)
         Malis SE pretty bèl Malis SE pretty YE
         "Malis is pretty" "Malis is pretty"

     (b) [AgrP se [CP [NP yon doktè]i [C' Ø [IP Jan ye ti]]
            SE a doctor Jan YE
         "John is a doctor" (Déprez and Vinet 1997: 229)

- **2. Resumption Analysis.** DeGraff (1992) argues that *ye* is the spellout of a trace left behind by the dislocated nonverbal (e.g., DP, PP, *wh*P) predicate and that *se* spells out the trace of the subject or topic. For the clefted nonverbal predicate the leftmost instance of *se* is actually the resumptive subject of the phrase, A-bound by the subject in Spec,IP.

  6. (b) [NumP sei [NumP yon doktè]]k [IP Boukii yek]
              SE a doctor Bouki YE
         "Bouki is a doctor" (DeGraff 1992: 111)

4. ANALYSIS
4.1 Nonverbal Predicate Fronting and Object Stranding

- **THE STRANDING PROBLEM** (Van Urk 2022: 2)

  7. (a) (se) anba tab la Malis ye (b) *se tab la Malis anba
         SE under table the Malis YE SE table the Malis under
         "Malis is under the table" "Malis is under the table"

     (c) (se) anba Malis anba /*ye tab la (d) *se anba Malis tab la
         SE under Malis under table the SE under Malis ball the
         "Malis is under the table"

- Either surface ye and front the object (7a) or double the predicate and leave the object in situ (i.e., **no stranding or doubling object complement**)

- Crosslinguistically, predicate fronting (verbal and nonverbal) involves **fronting nonphasal material** and the object of Pred/V (e.g., DP) varies as to whether they front with the verb (Van Urk 2022: 23–24)

- Either HC avoids the stranding problem by doubling OR *ye* must surface

4.2 PF Constraints on Copy Deletion and Multiple Spellout

- *[φ Ø]*: the absence of phonetic content precludes the formation of a prosodic domain, so penalize each prosodically empty phase φ (Kandybowicz 2015; cf. Kratzer and Selkirk 2007)

- **ECONOMY**: Pronounce as little as possible by penalizing each XP which is fully repeated (based on principles in Landau 2006 and Van Urk 2022)

- **CONTIGUITY**: Penalize distributed deletion by having all elements in a moved phrase form a contiguous string in the output (Van Urk 2022: 23)

- **REALIZE GOAL**: Penalize all constituents of a moved XP besides the the the the material in XP (e.g., V or PRED) that carries the movement–driving feature (Van Urk 2022: 22)

Input: [Pred DP] … [φ Pred DP]	*[φ Ø]	ECONOMY	CONTIGUITY	REALIZE GOAL
☞ a. [Pred DP] … [φ ye DP]				*
b. [Pred DP] … [φ Pred DP]		*!*		*
c. [Pred DP] … [φ ye DP]			*!	
d. [Pred DP] … [φ Pred DP]			*!	
e. [Pred DP] … [φ Pred DP]	*!			*
f. [Pred DP] … [φ Pred DP]			*!	
g. [Pred DP] … [φ ye DP]		*!		*

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